



August 26, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Aurea Figueroa, WorkFirst Program Manager

FROM: Robin Thompson, Program Administrator, Adult Basic Education
Jennifer Thornton, Program Administrator, Workforce Education

SUBJECT: Information Summary Regarding Basic Skills Tuition for WorkFirst partners

Spurred by legislative actions, State Board staff undertook a review of mandatory and optional tuition waivers beginning last summer. As a result of the review process, the State Board changed the existing Basic Skills waiver to require a \$25 per quarter tuition charge and provided the authority for colleges to waive the \$25 charge for those students who cannot pay. Whereas requiring the tuition fee is not optional, each college has the opportunity to provide or not provide a waiver locally to income eligible students. Those issues pertinent to our WorkFirst partners requiring a system-wide approach are addressed by State Board policy and guidance as follows:

- The \$25 charge is defined as tuition
- The tuition waiver is only for students who cannot afford to pay
- The tuition charge is \$25 each quarter the student is enrolled
- The revenue generated by the tuition charge is to be used in support of the basic skills programs
- Residency determination for basic skills students is still not required
- IRS rules exempt colleges from the due diligence requirement to collect Social Security numbers for basic skills enrollments

Among the principles of implementation are suggestions to minimize barriers to access, to implement processes to include third party billing, and to design a waiver process with preservation of student dignity as a hallmark.

In an agreement with Office of Financial Management and our WorkFirst partners, one-time carry-over funds for fiscal year 04-05 were provided in the Block Grant to each college in the amount of \$4,411. These dollars are to be spent on Basic Skills (ABE/ESL/GED or on HS Completion) tuition for WorkFirst eligible students. Following the exhaustion of these funds, Block Grant Tuition Assistance dollars can be used to cover the Basic Skills tuition charge.

Third party resources may also be used for payment assistance (social service agency, refugee assistance group, college Foundation office, etc.). Local partners needing additional information on the waiver process or use of the WorkFirst block grant funds should work with their campus WorkFirst Coordinators who is working with the college Adult Basic Education Coordinator.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Robin Thompson at (360) 704-4327 or rtompson@sbctc.ctc.edu. Thank you.

cc: College WorkFirst Coordinators
Council on Basic Skills
Glynnis Ashley, Employment Security Department
Kelly Lindseth, Community, Trade and Economic Development
Roxanne Lowe, Office of Financial Management